

AFGHANISTAN

AFGHANISTAN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Introduction

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, aroused immediate worldwide opposition. The war continues today in the form of a nationwide insurgency against the Soviets and their client regime, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA). Despite widespread military bombings of villages, hamlets and nomad camps, destruction of crops and livestock, and reprisals against noncombatants as a means of wearing down civilian support for the resistance, the "mujahidin" continue their staunch resistance effort, inflicting serious losses on the Soviet invaders and the DRA forces. A large majority of the Afghan civilians in the countryside and many of the towns and cities continue to support the mujahidin, but have increasing need for humanitarian assistance in order to sustain themselves in Afghanistan and their support for the resistance.

In their fight for national survival, the Afghans are paying a heavy price. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 4.6 million people — one quarter to one third of the 1979 Afghan population — have become refugees in Pakistan, Iran and elsewhere. The Government of Pakistan estimates that some three million Afghan refugees are in Pakistan, constituting the world's largest refugee population.

The Soviet invasion has completely disrupted the economic life in Afghanistan, one of the world's most isolated and economically underdeveloped countries. As war has raged through the arable valleys, agricultural infrastructure, including vitally important irrigation systems, has been severely damaged, in some cases nearly irreparably. Resulting food shortages in some areas have required foodgrains to be imported in order to fill the gap, but distribution problems are serious. A very high percent of the public transportation vehicles, many communication systems, and significant numbers of other public installations remain unusable. Afghans displaced in the countryside by combat and deliberate Soviet/Afghan regime policies are particularly vulnerable to food shortages and disease.

The medical situation is especially serious. In Afghanistan, thousands are killed, maimed and wounded each year. Public health care, never adequate in Afghanistan, is now worse than it was a decade ago.

Education has deteriorated considerably — from substandard to nonexistent in most areas — since the Soviet invasion. The public schools run by the regime have closed everywhere except in a few major cities. Some 80% of the pre-war Afghan teachers are no longer in their classrooms, having been executed, imprisoned, or forced to flee the country. Thousands of Afghans continue to be sent for "study" to the Soviet Union or Eastern Bloc

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countries.

While the mujahidin have had recent gains, the expectation is that the fighting will continue. The Soviets seem intent on a long-term strategy based on maintaining the current regime in Kabul, wearing down the resistance, and "Sovietizing" the Afghan government, economy, society, and people. The mujahidin appear willing to pay the heavy cost of continuing their struggle.

The United States publicly opposes the continuing Soviet occupation and strongly supports the United Nations General Assembly's calls for a negotiated political settlement based on four principles: (1) complete withdrawal of Soviet troops; (2) restoration of an independent and nonaligned Afghanistan; (3) self-determination for the Afghan people; and (4) return of the refugees in safety and honor. U.S. actions are aimed at keeping the pressure on the Soviets to negotiate a political solution. On the ground the resistance fighters maintain this pressure. Humanitarian assistance to the civilian population enables them to continue to live inside their own country and support the resistance fighters.

A.I.D. Humanitarian Assistance Strategy and Accomplishments to Date

The immediate objective of the A.I.D. humanitarian assistance program is to improve the ability of the Afghans to sustain themselves inside Afghanistan. In alleviating the suffering of the people in "free" areas of Afghanistan, A.I.D. seeks to address some of the factors which have forced millions of rural Afghans to move into Soviet-DRA controlled urban areas in Afghanistan, or to flee to refugee camps in Pakistan or Iran; the aim is eventually to reduce the flow of refugees and ultimately to encourage the voluntary repatriation of Afghans to resistance-controlled areas. Through our assistance to the Afghan resistance to develop networks of social services, the mujahidin will be able to offer essential services to the population that supports them.

The Afghans who have fled their homeland to become refugees in Pakistan are supplied with food, shelter, fuel for cooking and heating, health care, water, education and vocational training, and a variety of income generation opportunities. The expense is borne by Pakistan and the international community, primarily through the UNHCR and the World Food Program. Major contributors to the relief program are Japan, Western European countries, the United States, Saudi Arabia and other Arab states of the Gulf. The U.S. Government contributed about \$57 million for the Afghan refugees in FY 1987, including \$37 million through the World Food Program. This was approximately one third of the total international contribution for Afghan refugee relief. Including FY 1988 pledges, U.S. contributions to the Afghan refugee relief program to date total almost \$600 million.

For Afghans remaining inside their homeland, a modest program of direct assistance began in FY 1985, using International Disaster Assistance

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Funds. This program provided \$8 million in grants to European and U.S. private voluntary organizations (PVOs) to implement activities in health, education, food aid, and agricultural production for war-affected Afghans. In FY 1986, with the establishment of a separate A.I.D. Afghanistan Affairs Office in Islamabad, Pakistan, a long-term humanitarian assistance program was initiated to continue funding PVO activities and to finance the design and implementation of projects administered by the Afghan resistance Alliance. The Alliance formed technical committees to administer the A.I.D.-financed portfolio of health, education, commodity support, and agricultural projects. The portfolio developed in FY 1986 included an Economic Support Fund (ESF) program (\$14,758,000); a PL-480 Title II emergency relief food grant for war-affected Afghans (\$8.9 million); and the implementation overseas of the Department of Defense (DOD)-funded Afghan humanitarian relief program which finances transportation costs for humanitarian commodities and war-affected Afghan patients needing treatment abroad.

In FY 1987, Congress appropriated \$30 million in foreign assistance funds (\$17.8 million in Development Assistance and \$12.2 million in Economic Support Funds) to continue financing the resistance Alliance projects and PVO grants. A \$3 million wheat donation was financed with PL 480 funds. The DOD humanitarian program made available approximately \$4 million for support to Afghanistan in FY 1987, of which \$2 million was transferred to A.I.D. accounts and made available to the A.I.D. Representative to pay for transportation costs in the field. The \$2 million is reflected in the tables following this narrative. The A.I.D. program now includes the following projects:

Health: The Health Sector Support Project (306-0203) is implemented through the Alliance Health Committee (AHC) which receives A.I.D.-financed technical assistance from a U.S. consulting firm, Management Sciences for Health. The purpose of the project is to strengthen the capability of the Alliance to plan and manage the provision of both preventive and curative health services inside Afghanistan. During FY 1987, the first year of project implementation, almost 100 basic health workers were trained and a refresher training program for doctors and nurses was developed. To maximize the effectiveness of these health professionals, the AHC is now establishing and supplying clinics and hospitals in a significant percentage of the provinces of Afghanistan. Over 19 metric tons of medical supplies and equipment have been delivered to these facilities. A new Alliance health training center, which will facilitate a significant expansion of the training program, was opened at the end of FY 1988.

Education: The Education Sector Support Project (306-0202) is implemented through the Afghan Alliance Education Council. The Council is assisted by an A.I.D.-financed technical assistance team from the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Center for Afghanistan Studies. The project has made an excellent start and is currently supporting both elementary school education and adult literacy programs. Under the elementary education program, several hundred schools inside Afghanistan are being provided with

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textbooks, instructional aids, and administrative materials. Plans are in place to extend support to additional schools in the near future. Progress under the adult literacy program has been equally impressive. A primer has been prepared and published in two Afghan languages; hundreds of instructors have been trained; and thousands of participants have attended literacy classes. To manage its ambitious education program, the Council has created and staffed an Education Center for Afghanistan. In addition to its management responsibilities, the Center develops course curricula, textbooks, and instructional aids. In the future, it will offer a teacher training program.

Commodity Support: To counter Soviet destruction of crops and property in rural Afghanistan, the A.I.D. Commodity Export Program (306-0205) is providing war-affected Afghans with a range of humanitarian goods which includes food, medical supplies, shelter, and related items. A.I.D. is also providing vehicles and pack animals that are critical to the transport and distribution of these goods. Identification of the goods for which there is the greatest need is made by the Alliance Logistics Committee. The American Manufacturers Export Group, an 8-A firm under contract to A.I.D., handles procurement of the goods as well as logistics and commodity accounting within Pakistan. The majority of goods are procured from the local market in Pakistan. The remainder is procured from the United States and other free world countries.

Agriculture: The Agricultural Sector Support Project (306-0204) was developed to increase agricultural production in the liberated regions of Afghanistan. The project, which is being managed by the Alliance Agricultural Council with assistance from Volunteers in Technical Assistance (a U.S. private voluntary organization), operates under three tracks. Under the first track a new Afghan organization, which will serve as the implementing agent of the Agricultural Council, is being established and strengthened. The second track supports the procurement and delivery of agricultural commodities, such as irrigation pumps and draft animals, to war-affected Afghan farmers. Track three provides resources which contribute to the restoration and repair of rural infrastructure such as roads and irrigation canals. The project was authorized only recently in June 1987, yet already it can claim significant achievement. Agricultural information programs have been prepared for radio broadcast; a small thresher has been modified to suit Afghan conditions and distribution has begun; and a number of underground irrigation canals have been cleaned and rehabilitated.

Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs): Through its PVO Co-Financing Project (306-0201) A.I.D., in FY 1987, provided \$9 million to 12 voluntary organizations for 15 activities. More than half of these funds were granted to support health activities. As a result of A.I.D. and other donor contributions, PVOs report that they have established and now maintain a considerable number of hospitals and clinics throughout Afghanistan. PVOs are also active in training Afghan health care personnel. Among the American PVOs that are active in the A.I.D.-supported

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health portfolio are the International Medical Corps, Freedom Medicine, and Mercy Corps International. European PVOs are also being supported. Outside of health, A.I.D. is supporting PVOs which concern themselves with improved nutrition, increased agricultural production, and resettlement inside Afghanistan.

Through the Technical Services and Support Project (306-0020) A.I.D. assists the Afghan resistance to identify, develop, and evaluate priority humanitarian assistance projects that will improve the ability of Afghans in "free" areas to sustain themselves within Afghanistan. The project provides the technical advisory services, auxiliary equipment, and local institutional support needed for the effective development and implementation of discrete projects. The project also funds small activities which do not warrant separate project status, such as studies of agricultural needs.

A PL-480 Title II grant of wheat (20,000 metric tons) was made to the Government of Pakistan in FY 1986 to assist it in offsetting its contribution of food to war-affected Afghans. Soybean oil (17,900 metric tons) was granted to and sold on the local market by the Government of Pakistan to generate funds for transporting the wheat to the Afghans. In FY 1987, an additional 23,000 metric tons of wheat were made available to the Alliance. No less than 40,000 metric tons of wheat and possibly 20,000 metric tons of soybean oil will be provided in FY 1988. Additional food will be provided in FY 1989.

In addition to the A.I.D. portfolio, the A.I.D. Representative administers the field activities of the Department of Defense Humanitarian Relief Program. This program was created "for persons displaced or who are refugees because of the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union" by Section 305 of PL 99-145. Over 500 tons of excess DOD and donated humanitarian supplies were transported in FY 1987 for use by war-affected Afghans.

Transportation of Afghans for medical treatment is also financed with DOD funds. As of December 31, 1987, more than 450 wounded men, women, and children had been sent to U.S., European, and Middle Eastern hospitals. The medical services are being donated by medical specialists and institutions. A.I.D. has made grants to the International Medical Corps and the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration to undertake the screening and placement of these patients.

FY 1989 Program

A.I.D. will continue funding the projects implemented through the Afghan resistance Alliance, and a variety of PVO activities being financed through the PVO Co-Financing Project.

The program will consist of the following activities begun in FY 1986:

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Technical Services and Support Project (306-0200);

PVO Co-Financing (306-0201);

Education Sector Support Project (306-0202);

Health Sector Support Project (306-0203);

Agricultural Sector Support Project (306-0204);

Commodity Export Program (306-0205); and

Afghanistan Humanitarian Relief (306-0206)
(financed by transfer of funds from DOD).

Wheat and soybean oil will be provided to support Afghan beneficiaries.